

Monday, April 18, 2005

## 'Vaccinate' program reaching out to Indiana youth

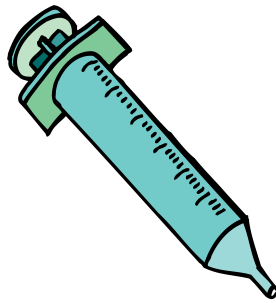
To Helene Uhlman and the Hammond Health Department, it's all about protecting children. Thus their goal of making sure every child in Hammond is up-to-date on vaccinations.

What began as an "Immunization Blitz" 11 years ago has now broadened into participating as a pilot site in the "Vaccinate Before You Graduate" immunization education program.

"We are proud to be able to serve the community and honored to be a pilot for the 'Vaccinate Before You Graduate' program," said Uhlman, the health department administrator.

The "Vaccinate Before You Graduate" program, also promoted by the Indiana State Department of Health in cooperation with the Indiana Immunization Coalition,

aims to increase adolescent immunizations statewide by educating teenagers and their parents about the risks of vaccine-preventable diseases and the benefits of



getting immunized.

"Studies show that if we can protect children, we reduce health problems, which in turn reduces the cost of insurance to families down the road," said Uhlman.

Recommended vaccinations for teens include hepatitis b, meningococcal meningitis, influenza (for

those at risk), tetanus-diphtheria (Td), and varicella (chickenpox, if needed).

The Hammond immunization blitz, which began April 9 and continues throughout the month, features food, entertainment, photo identification cards prepared by the local police and sheriffs department, free immunizations, and much more.

"We feel it is important to take one month out of the year and make an extra effort to go out in the community and make immunizations more easily accessible," said Uhlman.

The health department has worked hard to publicize the program, said Uhlman. A local restaurant has agreed to stuff flyers in its customer bags, the local transit sys-

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## National Women's Health Week May 8-14

### Office of Women's Health hosting statewide activities

The Office of Women's Health at the Indiana State Department of Health is joining the nation in celebrating National Women's Health Week May 8 to 14 with more than 17 statewide activities.

"The activities we are sponsoring and participating in throughout the state will focus on the importance of women incorporating simple preventive and positive health behaviors into everyday life," said Barbara Levy Tobey, director of the Office of

Women's Health.

Educational materials are being provided by the Office of Women's Health at ISDH to commemorate Women's Health Week in the lobby all week. There will also be free

bone density screenings for women in the lobby at ISDH on Monday, May 9. The screenings are a painless non-invasive ultrasound of the heel and measures the strength of the bone (BMD). To make an appointment for a heel scan, contact Janet Corvin at 233-7256 or [jcorvin@isdh.state.in.us](mailto:jcorvin@isdh.state.in.us).

The Office of Women's Health is also rolling out a new cardiovascular program, Heart Truth/ WomenHeart. This is a combination of two successful national

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# Cultural competency, health disparities examined

A satellite seminar and Web cast was held earlier this month to examine healthcare-related issues affecting minority populations in Indiana.

The program, "Cultural Competency and Health Disparities: Moving Beyond Talk," was co-sponsored by the Indiana State Department of Health Office of Minority Health, the Indiana Minority Health Advisory Committee, and the Indiana Minority Health Coalition.

"All Hoosiers have the opportunity to improve the quality of their lives," said State Health Commissioner Judith A. Monroe, M.D. "Cultural incompetence or lack of understanding and appreciation of cultural differences in the delivery of health care services can lead to misunderstandings and misinterpretations of clinical actions, diagnoses, and treatment recommendations and thereby adversely affect the provider-patient interaction, the quality of the health care outcomes, and the degree of patient satisfaction with the health care encounter and/or system."

The keynote speaker was Tawara Goode, who is the Director of the National Center for Cultural Competence at the Georgetown Univer-

sity Center for Child and Human Development. She discussed a variety of issues and offered several recommendations in her presentation, which she titled, "Organizational Cultural and Linguistic Competency. It's a journey...not a destination."

Three Indiana experts then discussed steps that patients, providers and healthcare organizations can take to improve cultural competence and reduce healthcare disparities in Indiana.

"One of the goals of the Healthy Indiana Minority Health Plan was to provide this type of forum to talk about issues concerning minority health," said Office of Minority Health Director Danielle Patterson. "I was pleased to reach a number of the community organizations that we serve with this forum."

The panelists included Connie Floerchinger, Advantage Health Solution; Nancy Jewell, Indiana Minority Health Coalition; and McKenzie Scott Lewis, Clarian Health Partners.

The seminar concluded with a question and answer period, during which the panelists answered questions posed by the in-studio audience and by viewers.

"Hopefully, organizations that



Photo provided by Tawara Goode

**Tawara Goode**

are looking at implementing or improving their cultural competency program found this information very useful," said Patterson. "We wanted to present information that addresses these issues from the viewpoint of the patient, provider, and health system. The keynote speaker as well as the panelists provided information on cultural competency models that are evidence-based and have had a positive impact on their organizations."

An archived version of the seminar is now available on the Office of Minority Health page of the Indiana State Department of Health Web site. Go to [www.in.gov/isdh/programs/omh/index.htm](http://www.in.gov/isdh/programs/omh/index.htm).

—Andy Zirkle

## Editor's note:

Changes are coming!

We are currently reviewing ways to improve our newsletter and make it an even more valuable communication tool.


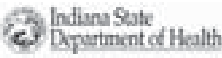
Beginning in May, the newsletter will expand to six pages, and will be published on a monthly basis.

In the near future, look for a new name, new features, and a new look!

As we begin this change-over process, I would like to hear your comments. Please e-mail me at [jfletche@isdh.state.in.us](mailto:jfletche@isdh.state.in.us).

Story ideas are always welcome. Just keep in mind that information needs to be submitted a month in advance.

I look forward to hearing from you!

The Indiana State Department of Health *Express* is a biweekly publication for ISDH employees and stakeholders. Words in blue are links that you can access directly if you read the *Express* online. To submit news items, call (317) 234-2817 or send information to:

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# Employee Service Awards

April 8, 2005 • Photos by Julie Fletcher

(RIGHT) State Health Commissioner Judy Monroe, M.D. presented the Influenza Vaccine Work Group the 2005 Teamwork Award. Formed when the flu vaccine shortage began in October 2004, the group, led by Charlene Graves, M.D., successfully accomplished overseeing the distribution of Indiana's allocated flu shots. The group included: (left to right) Randy Snyder, Health Care Regulatory Services; Andy Zirkle, Office of Public Affairs; Dr. Monroe; Michael Runau, Immunization; Dr. Graves, Immunization; Robert St. John, Office of Public Affairs; Pam Pontones, Epidemiology Resource Center; Robert Teclaw, D.V.M., Epidemiology Resource Center; Liz Hibler, Epidemiology Resource Center; Steve Sellers, Immunization; and Terry Whitson, assistant commissioner, Health Care Regulatory Services. Not shown is Shawn Richards, Epidemiology Resource Center.



(LEFT) Clara Daniels, Operational Services, receives her 35 years of service award from State Health Commissioner Judy Monroe, M.D. Clara received an engraved clock. (RIGHT) Pam Ayres, Public Health Preparedness, received an engraved mug for her five years of service.



(RIGHT) Thirty-year service award recipients received personalized screened prints. Shown here is Dr. Monroe; Tom Cronau, Microbiology Labs; Peter Boykin, Weights and Measures; and Larry Berge, ITS.



**Congratulations  
to all award  
recipients!**



## Vaccinate

(Continued from page 1)

tem is promoting the program with advertising on the side of the city buses, and public service announcements have also been prepared.

The "Vaccinate Before You Graduate" portion includes working with schools and offering immunizations to an estimated 2,000 eighth graders.

And, Uhlman said, it is all at no cost to the taxpayers because of community donations and volunteers.

"We have a lot of wonderful people helping us," she said.

One of those, she said, is Hammond Mayor Thomas M. McDermott, Jr. who issued a proclamation declaring April 2005 as "Immunization Blitz month."

Hammond Health Officer Rodrigo R. Panares, M.D. said, "We salute the hidden heroes who do so much to protect our health. Through their public health effort, we have controlled such diseases as polio, smallpox, mumps, measles, rubella, and now hepatitis B."

For information on the Hammond Health Department's efforts, call 219-853-6358.

### Vigo Countt targets teens

Also participating as a pilot site is the Vigo County Health Department.

It is targeting eleventh graders,

according to Sheran Allee, RN, Well Child Clinic supervisor.

Clinics will be organized at the area high schools through the "Vaccinate Before You Graduate" program. The school nurses, she said, estimate that 50 percent of the students are not vaccinated against hepatitis B or have not reported those immunizations.

"We know immunizations work

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**"We know immunizations work and are one of public health's greatest triumphs."**

**--Sheran Allee, R.N.**

*Well Child Clinic supervisor  
Vigo County Health Department*

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and are one of public health's greatest triumphs," said Allee.

"With the exception of safe water, no other health strategy has had such tremendous effect on reducing disease and improving health; however vaccine-preventable diseases and deaths continue to occur among adolescents ages 11 to 19."

Improving the immunization rate among adolescents, she added, can foster wellness and health in the adolescents and in the community.

Besides the school clinics, the health department is also hosting a "Senior High Night" to vaccinate those senior still needing shots, a "Sports PE" clinic to offer well-child immunizations, and a Nurses Luncheon to educate and inform the public health nurses, school nurses, nurses educators, and office staff about changes in adolescent immunizations.

Marketing efforts include sending notices to parents of students, public service announcements, and a television interview.

Information regarding HEA 1133 passed by the Indiana General Assembly in 2004 is also being distributed to the parents and to physicians.

The law, which becomes effective July 1, 2005 requires that every child in Indiana who enters grades 9 and 12 be immunized against hepatitis B.

This age group was not covered by the 1999 state legislation that requires children in Indiana entering kindergarten or first grade to be immunized against hepatitis B.

The Vigo County Health Department can be reached at 812-462-3428.

For more information on the "Vaccinate Before You Graduate" Program, visit the ISDH Web site at [www.statehealth.in.gov](http://www.statehealth.in.gov).

## Women

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campaigns. Heart Truth is an awareness campaign sponsored by the National Lung and Blood Institute. WomenHeart is the only patient advocacy organization representing the 8 million American women living with heart disease. By combining these two campaigns, the Office of Women's Health is focusing on

bringing knowledge and understanding of this disease to Indiana women in a meaningful way.

"We are using Women's Health Week to publicize the importance of women thinking about their number one killer: Cardiovascular disease," said Tobey. "One in three American women, regardless of race or ethnicity, will die of heart

disease. It also strikes at younger at ages than most people think, and the risk rises in middle age. Heart disease can diminish health, well-being, and the ability to do even the simple activities like climbing stairs," explained Tobey.

[Click here](#) for more information on statewide activities celebrating Women's Health Week in Indiana.